/269/

131 361 [648] [799] Of the two centers of Bororo habitation situated, one to the northwest of Cuiabá and the other east-southeast of the same city, the second today is made up of three groups of native villages: those of the middle and upper São Lourenço, provided with residents of the Service de Protection des Indiens /Indian Protection Service/, those of the Garças River, in the diamantiferous region, supervised by the Salesian missions, and lastly the three aldées /villages/ of Kejara, Pobori, and Jarudori on the Río Vermelho, a tributary on the left bank of the upper São Lourenço, which have been less directly affected by religious and administrative influences. We stayed in the most important of them, the Kejara aldeia, during Janauary-February, 1936, at the time when the rainy season completely isolates the natives from the rare contacts which they are able to have at other times of the year with the Brazilian population; besides, the latter, never very numerous, some time ago completely evacuated the region, where material and sanitary conditions seem particularly unfavorable. Aside from two telegraph operators, only a few families of fishermen, leprous for the most part, live only on the banks of the rivers.

101 132 648 563 361

241 137 231 177 [223] 621 62 162 [221]

Kejara aldeia occupies a wide, partly natural clearing on the left bank of the Río Vermelho right on the riverbank and is bound on the south, west, and east by red sandstone escarpments. Native gardens—manioc, maize, and rice—extend for several hundred meters all around the village, closely mingled with the forest or brushwood which is beginning to come up again. Across them, as across the village, freely wander some hens and ducks, presents of the Protection Service, which live today in a half-wild state and /270/ have to be shot with the bow to be caught. In January-February, 1936, Kejara aldeia comprised, in addition to the "men's house," 27 houses, /each/ inhabited for the most part by several families. The total population, impossible to evaluate in a precise fashion—part of the village is constantly away, some fishing, some hunting, and some either visiting or on a mission to other native villages, amounted to approximately 140 people, the number of women being less than that of men,

/113 cont./

797 Sangradouro, and the Coração de Jesus colony on the Rio
131 Barreiro, tributary of the Rio das Garças, which is generally
designated by the Bororo name Meruri, "place of the rays."
[114] I was in these missions in January of 1934. The road from
Cuyabá to the first one is about 50 leagues; and from there to
Meruri is still about 20 leagues.

133 Sangradouro is located on a height of 625 meters, and
Meruri on a height of 470 meters. The observatory of
132 Sangradouro verified, from its founding in the year of 1924,
as average temperature, 27°. The maximum took place in
/114/ January of 1926, with 38°; the minimum on June 20 of
1933, with -5°. The barometric average in Sangradouro up
to now is 715. The observatory of Meruri confirmed as
maximum temperature in the year of 1933, on August 26,
37.4°, as minimum of the same year, on June 22, -1.3°.

In Sangradouro the great freeze of June of 1933 nipped
132 the bananas, manioc, sugar cane, tomatoes, coffee, mango,
291 avocado and the buriti, while the plants with thorns, such as
orange trees, lemon trees, and the rose bushes did not suffer
at all. In Meruri they plant maize, rice, manioc, sugar cane,
vineyards, pineapple, and other fruits.

162 In January of 1931, 37 Bororo families, which numbered
[161] 185 individuals, lived in Sangradouro. In January of 1934
only 5 families were there, composed of 11 adults and twelve
children.

On January 18 of 1934 28 Bororo families lived in Meruri,
that is, 32 men, 28 women, 33 children of male sex and 44
children of the female sex, 137 individuals in all.

[131] In the environs of the prospectors' settlement Poxoreu,
which arose more or less in 1925 on the west bank of the Rio
Poxoreu, at about 54° 20' west longitude and 16° south
latitude, and which in May of 1933 numbered 254 houses
with 824 inhabitants, there lived among the Brazilians, in
[166] January of 1934, 70 Bororo, for the most part men. Fifty
[797] of them had emigrated in the /115/ previous year from

8:Cook M-3 (1900-1901) 1909
SP8 Bororo SP8

133 everywhere precipitous, and in many places, perpendicular. The basins below are, for the most part, fairly level, while here and there colossal towers arise. After a storm, the air [132] is amazingly clear and transparent. This, and the altitude of our position, enabled us to see enormous distances in every direction, and to look down upon a stupendous expanse of wild, rugged, unexplored and unknown world, that was scarred and furrowed, torn and upheaved by the storms, convulsions and subsidences of countless ages. Our view of the earth was like gazing at the moon through a powerful telescope, and beholding a hemisphere of mountains and hills, plateaux, valleys and chasms. At one place, the Rio Vermelho has tunneled under a mountain and one can look down into appalling depths; while at other exceedingly interesting localities on the edge of this Giant's table, some of which we visited New Year's day, this river has made prodigious excavations. Once, standing on the edge of a broad, vertical-walled gorge and shouting toward the opposite wall, we listened to a splendid echo which bounded and rebounded, again and again, zigzagging, as it descended the gorge to the open basin. We also saw this day, numerous rain-storms raging around us at the same moment, some near and others remote. This was one of the most peculiar and interesting New Year's Days that I have ever experienced.

131 Steamboats could ascend from the Amazon and from the river della Plata to within a few miles of where we stood. There are rapids to overcome on the Amazon side, 'tis true, but none on the Rio della Plata side. This would give nearly three thousand miles of navigation each way from the divide.

We had now left civilization behind and were getting into the land of the Bororó. Our New Year's encampment was close to the first small village of this tribe that we had yet seen, and these simple dwellers of the wilderness, wearing nothing but a coat of red grease, thronged about us all the time we remained here, gazing at us curiously, for we were no less a freak to them than they were to us. It was while here that I first heard them sing the *bakororó*, the wild man's

361 609 [291] [302] 533

8:Cook M-3 (1900-1901) 1909
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evening anthem, which will be described in future pages. We 533
were at our camp at the time, a quarter of a mile distant from the savage chorus. It was indeed wild music, and an appropriate production of the wild ones and the wilderness. It was hard to believe that this fusillade of uncouth, alarming sounds issued from human throats. This savage music resembled, somewhat, the remarkable and uncanny sounds produced by coyotes when heard at night from a distance.

Doubtless these nude, unclean savages would appear ex- 114
tremely repulsive and unhuman to most civilized people, yet I could but regard them as simple, overgrown, neglected children; and finding myself again among such rude, needy beings, I experienced a pleasure and satisfaction which I cannot describe, and inwardly thanked God, Who, in His gracious providence, had led me again to their haunts after a long detention among a more advanced race. Could I be among them once more, my cup of joy would be full.

Two naked Bororó accompanied us as helpers during the [123]
remainder of our journey to one of the chief villages of the tribe. The world about us became more and more wild, rugged and inhospitable as we advanced, and the difficulties and dangers of travel increased. Moreover, the myriads of the insect 136
world seemed to resent our encroachment into their domains, and fell upon us with ever-increasing numbers and ferocity; while the elements, too, appeared to join forces with the rest of Nature, for storms occurred, not only daily, but several times [132]
during twenty-four hours. One night, we found ourselves encamped upon the "private grounds" of a colony of destructive foraging ants, which set to work promptly to cut us to pieces; and when we halted at noon for breakfast, some days, we were set upon by hordes of a stupid, sluggish, stingless bee, called "father of honey" by the Brazilians, but known to science as the *Melipona fasculata*, of which there are more than fifty varieties in Brazil. They were attracted to us by the perspiration of ourselves and our beasts, and also by the odor of our food. They did not attack us in a single swarm, but came to us individually and gradually, until quart